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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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*South Vietnam: (Saigon's military rulers apparently hope to revive cooperation with once-powerful politico-religious sects in an effort to boost the counterinsurgency effort in the delta.)

(Brigadier General Nguyen Huu Co, the new corps commander for the provinces south of the Mekong River, has indicated that he considers support from the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai sects of prime importance in developing popular support in the countryside.)

(Co stated that he has already begun talks with Hoa Hao leaders and envisages arming their followers under the government's paramilitary Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, rather than permitting the sects to re-establish their own armies. The armed strength of the sects was largely crushed in 1955 by Diem when they attempted to challenge his authority.)

(Premier Tho has indicated that he and military leader General Minh hope to use Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Catholic elements as major instruments in a "spiritual revitalization" of the strategic hamlet program. Military leaders have charged that the program was poorly implemented under Diem.)

(Although their own plans to improve it by drawing on "Malayan and Israeli experiences" remain)

(unclear, they have been particularly critical of past use of forced labor in the hamlets and of Ngo Dinh Nhu's efforts to indoctrinate strategic hamlet inhabitants in the Diem regime's obscure "personalist" philosophy.)

In a further effort to remove influences of the Ngo family, the government has announced the establishment of a committee to study removal of the "vestiges of the former corrupt regime." Madame Nhu's Women's Solidarity Movement, the mass National Revolutionary Movement, and the semi-secret Can Lao Party--the Diem regime's political control organ--reportedly have been banned.

The new government has taken additional liberalization steps, has abolished a tax on remittances to students abroad, and has allowed free distribution of newspapers and magazines.

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Argentina: (President Illia probably will soon initiate formal action to annul Argentina's petroleum contracts with US and other foreign firms.)

(Annulment of these contracts was a major plank in Illia's party platform in last summer's election campaign, and he recently told Governor Harriman that he was irrevocably committed to make good on it.)

(The issue, however, has been brought to a head sooner than expected by an intense propaganda campaign conducted by extreme nationalists, some of whom are Illia's closest advisers. An important new factor behind this campaign is the widespread resentment that has been stirred up by the proposed US Senate amendment to the foreign aid bill which aims to cut off US aid if Argentina moves against the oil companies without compensation.)

(At the moment, the best hope held out to the companies is a possibility that their contracts eventually may be renegotiable. Before the present furor, renegotiation of some of the contracts had been a foregone conclusion.)

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*Iraq: (Information as of 0500 EST) The arrest on 11 November of doctrinaire Iraqi Baath Party leader Saadi by more moderate elements of the party has led to a split which threatens the ability of the party to maintain itself in power.)

(Saadi, an advocate of rapid socialization and early union with Syria, has wide support in the lower echelons of the party. Members of the national guard, the party's paramilitary wing, are not yet reconciled to the move against him. Air force commander Hardan Tikriti, [redacted]

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[redacted] is evidently also siding with Saadi, and air force jets have attacked the presidential palace. A curfew has been imposed on the Baghdad area.)

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(The position of Defense Minister Ammash and party cadres within the army responsive to his instructions is not yet known, but may well be the deciding factor in the struggle. Non-Baathist army elements may also attempt to take advantage of the confusion in Baghdad to oust the party from power entirely.)

(Saadi, who has led the Iraqi branch of the international party since before the February coup, had for some time been at odds with Premier Bakr and Foreign Minister Shabib, who argued that the party must adopt a moderate line in order to gain wider support. Although Saadi won a narrow vote of confidence on this issue at a regional party conference early this fall, the moderate faction continued to press for his ouster. A new regional leadership group comprised of moderates was announced by Baghdad radio early this morning shortly before the radio's usual frequencies went off the air.)

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(The struggle between party factions in Iraq is certain to have repercussions in Syria. A similar confrontation appears to have taken place there over the long-awaited formation of a new government to replace that of "moderate" Salah al-Din Bitar. Syrian troops formerly commanded by Muhammad Umran, the new Syrian deputy premier, are presently stationed in northern Iraq.)

(The sharpness of the struggle will also lead to fractionalization of the party, which has maintained its hold on power by presenting a united front to its many enemies.)

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*Syria: Yesterday's Syrian cabinet shakeup appears to be a victory for doctrinaire elements of the Syrian Baath party.

General Amin al-Hafiz, commander of the army and who holds pragmatic socialistic views, has assumed the prime ministership. Hafiz has long been a rival of the new deputy prime minister General Muhammad Umran, who is a leader of the doctrinaire Baathist faction which wishes to carry out drastic socialistic measures. Umran's position apparently has been strengthened with his rise to the deputy prime minister post, along with the appointment of one of his followers as army chief of staff.

Most other positions in the 23-man cabinet remain in the hands of holdovers from the Bitar cabinet which resigned yesterday, although there has been some reshuffling of posts. [REDACTED]

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Congo (Brazzaville): (Some of the leftist labor and youth leaders who spearheaded the overthrow of former President Youlou last August are reported to wish to oust moderate provisional government leader Massamba-Debat. Although they apparently lack the support of the army, which would be essential in overthrowing the government, there are indications that some individual officers might be willing to back leftist pressure for a reshuffling of the government.)

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